

Strategies to keep allergies at bay

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'Tis the season for allergy sufferers. Hay fever affects more than 35 million people. Here are some dos and don'ts to help alleviate allergy attacks:

- **DO keep windows closed at night.** Use air conditioning, which cleans, cools, and dries the air.
- **DO minimize early morning activities outdoors** between 5 and 10 a.m. This is the time of day when pollen is most prevalent.
- **DO keep your car windows closed** when you travel by car.
- **DO take a vacation** during the height of the pollen season. Pick a place that's more pollen-free, like the beach.
- **DO take the medications** prescribed by your allergist.
- **DON'T spend much time outdoors** when the pollen count, humidity, or wind factor is high.
- **DON'T rake leaves or mow lawns**, which stirs up molds and pollens. Leave this for someone who isn't allergic.
- **DON'T hang sheets or clothing out to dry** as pollens and molds may collect in these items.
- **DON'T grow too many indoor plants.** Wet soil is a breeding ground for molds.

Spring, summer, even in the fall, allergies plague many of us and cause sneezing, itchy eyes, and congestion, or asthma. Luckily, most of these symptoms can be easily managed by taking a little bit of preventative action.